Depot Town Rag

FREE 100% RAG CONTENT

JULY 1986 EVENTS
for the good of the block:
Foundation - 3rd at 8 p.m.
Boomer Days - 11, 12, 13th
Foundation - 17th at 7:30 p.m.
Join your neighbors
at The Old Caboose

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

ARE FORD'S BOOMERS OUR BOOMERS?

When Edsel B. Ford II talked about the 'boomers' at the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce 66th annual meeting a while ago, he probably didn't mean the bums, tramps and hoboes who show up for depot Town's Boomer Days every mid-summer.

He was talking about the 77 million 'baby boomers' who are this country's most active buying market; the same group his Lincoln/Mercury company wants to serve. Depot Towners, of course are talking about their friends, neighbors and 'regulars' who dress up as Emmet Kelly-type not-so-seriously-depressed hoboes and re-live the depression days of this old railroad district.

Edsel Ford's boomers are the newly affluent 'yuppie' crowd who buy at least one of everything and insist on top quality. Depot Town's boomers are into the preservation ethic and seek the friendly, home-town commercial ambience of the days before plasticized and glitzy shopping malls.

Even though today's homeless may be living in street-side packing crates, few of them ride the rails any more. In fact, a lot of last summer's bums showed up in a Cougar, a Mark VII or a Topaz. Maybe Henry Ford's great grandson and Depot Town are talking about the same group, after all?

Depot Town's 1986
BOOMER DAYS
July 11, 12, 13

Ypsilanti's old railroad district celebrates the days of the bums, tramps and hoboes of yesteryear:

Friday, July 11
BUM'S NIGHT OUT!
7:30 p.m. (Farmers' Market Coffee Shop)

- Coronation of the Hobo King and Queen
- Reception and neighborhood party following
- City Manager Matt Hennessee
- other entertainments for the good of the block

Saturday, July 12
IN THE MARKET AND ON THE BLOCK:

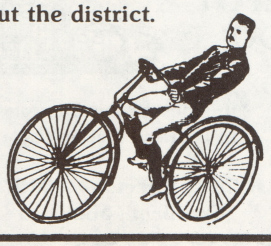
All day: Shop Specials (see flyers)
All day: Carp Contest (entries from Aubrees)
8-10 a.m. - adults set up Hobo Jungle
10 a.m. - kids move into Hobo Jungle
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Boomer Boutique near the Old Caboose
Noon - Kidsarts with Professor Malarkey
2 p.m. - Mulligan Stew-off judging (Coffee Shop)
(Bring your favorite sample and recipe. Hoppins and gumps were chickens and vegetables stolen from neighborhood gardens.)
3 p.m. - Costume judging (Coffee Shop)
(Awards for all ages of bums, tramps and hoboes)
4 p.m. - No-Talent Show (Coffee Shop)
(If you have nerve enough to do it, we'll watch it)

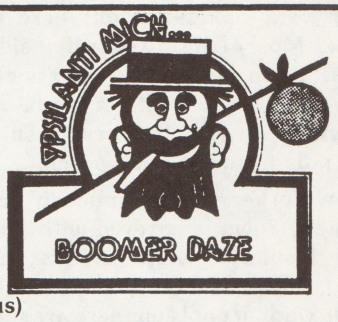
Sunday, July 13
BOOMER WIND-DOWN

10 a.m. - Hobo brunch
followed by Ice Cream Social Balloon bust (at the Old Caboose)

OTHER EVENTS AND INFORMATION:

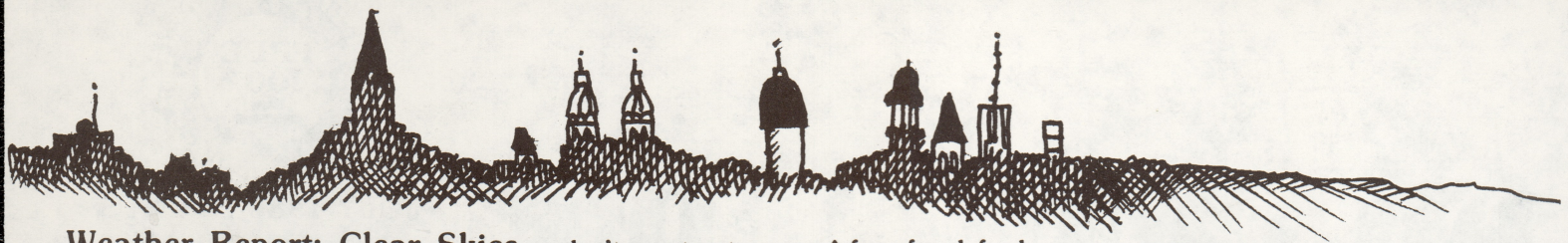
Watch for posters, flyers and facts throughtout the district.





(chorus)
OH, (train whistle)
THE BUMS AND TRAMPS AND HOBOES,
WE'RE ALL COMING DOWN
TO A BOOMER CELEBRATION
IN YPSI'S DEPOT TOWN.

A bum's a shiftless fella
With one peculiar quirk:
He likes to live the good life,
But he don't wanna work.
In the dumpster by the Sidetrack,
At the Old Town kitchen door,
He will ask you for a handout
And tell you why he's poor.
(chorus)
A tramp is just a traveler
A-riding on the rails,
He'll talk the ears right off you
With all his travelin' tales.
He has ridden all the freighters
From here out to the Coast
But, the railroad yard in Ypsi
Is the one he likes the most.
(chorus)
Now, the hobo is a friendly sort;
He'll do 'most any task
From choppin' wood to pullin' weeds
Or anything you'd ask.
An odd job for a home-cooked meal,
He's not known for sloth,
But don't ask him in to dinner
Or he'll steal your table cloth!
(chorus)
The good old days of Boomers
We thought were in the past
But the way the country's going
They just might make it last.
So just save your old fedora;
Us Boomers have it made.
Now the hobo jungle's back again
And we're sleeping in the shade.
(chorus)



Weather Report: Clear Skies, Sunny and Warm

UP ON THE ROOF

(strictly summer reading)

All those Depot Town tans you see walking around the block aren't from swimming, sailing or golfing. Some of them were baked-in right here on the block. Most of the fifty-odd (!) residents of Depot Town enjoy easy access to their roof, whether via direct walk-out, up ladders or steps to hatches, or shinnying up a pole from the back porch.

New Yorkers call it 'tar beach' but most of Depot Town is covered with a higher-Tech insulated white or grey roofing today, and lotions, mats, towels and kiddie wading pools up there are seen only by the neighborhood birds or an occasional helicopter crew. This time of year finds many Depot Towners supine among the chimneys, vent pipes, skylights and ventilators – far above the hustle and bustle of East Cross Street.

Being in the Huron River valley, third and fourth floor roof-tops are still far below the foundation line of most of the City, but one of the most spectacular views of Ypsilanti's unique skyline is enjoyed from this vantage point. Most of this lovely town is heavily forested, but the Ten Terrific Towers of Ypsilanti are best shown from Depot Town's rooftops. Poking through all that greenery on the western escarpment are (left to right) - The Centennial Center - The Methodist Church - Old Town Hall - First Presbyterian Church (two of the three towers clear the tree tops from here, and we still think they look Catholic) - The Water Tower - Old Ypsi High's clock tower, - The Old Fire Hall - EMU's Pierce Hall - Old Ypsi High's smokestack - EMU's Hoyt tower complex (three?) - the grain elevators at the Farm Bureau.

Some will say that's more than ten. Others will contend that some of them don't count as towers. A few of us defend the number just so we can use the alliteration of 'ten terrific towers.' Such controversy is just right for a summer afternoon's debate - if you don't have to get up or roll over.

The eclectic turrets of Hutchinson House were obscured by the first blossoms of spring and only the ancient pines of Highland Cemetery and the towers of WSDS and Columbia Cable are visible to the north.

But turn over on your towel and enjoy the eastern ridge; Gilbert House's rear tower and the monolith of Beyer Memorial Hospital. Why, it's so clear today that, if we were on top of Beyer, we could probably see Detroit's Ren/Cen. Do you think it could cast a morning shadow long enough to reach a city worthy of the 'renasissance' description?

As we watch the vapor trails of high-flying jet streams far above little, old Depot Town, we close this summer reverie with a song –

"When this old world starts getting me down
And people are just too much for me to face,
I climb 'way up to the top of the stairs
And all my cares just drift right into space.
On the roof it's peaceful as can be
And there the world below can't bother me.

"Let me tell you now,
When I come home feeling tired and beat
I go up where the air is fresh and sweet,
I get away from the hustling crowds
And all that rat-race noise down in the street
On the roof the only place I know
Where you can just have to wish to make it so.
Oh, let's go up on the roof.

"Right smack dab in the middle of town
I found a paradise that's trouble proof.
So up on the roof, up on the roof.
Ev'rything is all right up on the roof.
Oh, come on, baby, up on the roof, up on the roof."

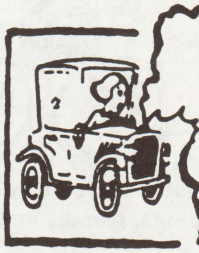
(Up On The Roof - Gerry Goffin and Carole King, Copyright 1962 by Screen Gems - Columbia Music, Inc., NY)

///Artrain

ALL ABOARD:

The Artrain Steering Committee continues to meet on alternate Saturdays in the old Caboose at 10 a.m. Join them on July 5th and 19th to volunteer your help as a gallery guide, host, demonstrator or other duties to help welcome the thousands of tourists who will tour the train during its third stay in Historic Ypsilanti - August 18 - 23.

The Cricket Box
a specialty gift & card shop
.... featuring Sunrise & Green Tiger Press cards, Gwen Frostic Stationary, Dakin animals, dolls, stoneware, crystal, antiques, Bill Coleman photography, and more ....
27 East Cross Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
(313)487-5595
located in Ypsilanti's historic "Depot Town"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Ypsilanti, MI 48198
483-2248

483-3637
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Ypsilanti, MI 48198
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Jed's AUTO ELECTRIC
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Phone: 483-1238

THE HANDWRITING ON THE (freight house) WALL

WALLS SHOWED INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF YPSILANTI

What irony! Since the following article was written, the interior walls of the Freight House have been power-washed and most of the grime and graffiti of the Nineteenth Century have been removed. When we went back to check the business listed, we were too late. Much light and color have returned to that gigantic space, but the records mentioned are gone. Careful observers can still find hints of "Michigan Ladder," "Cass Walker 1/23/99," and "United Stove" which defied the modern cleaners, but all the rest have been removed. Only THE RAG has the record now. Watch for the colorful four-color offset coffee table version to follow.

Chalked and painted symbols on the interior walls of today's Ypsilanti Farmers' Market building - known as the Freight House - indicate the vitality of Ypsilanti's commerce and industry at the height of rail shipping in America –

O.E. Thompson and Company
Ypsilanti Iron Works
Davis and Company

A ramp on the Chicago end admitted every Model - T Ford in Ypsi in those days when people put their cars into winter storage. The most recent tenant before the City's development of the Farmers' Market was the Smith/Tyner furniture companies.

For nearly twenty years, newer Ypsilanti rehabbers wondered what the interior of that long building by the tracks was like. Was it one long room? Or did each of those doors open into a different store room? When the City bought the edifice from the railroad and took the boards off the windows, just about everybody in town had suggestions of what to do with it.

Today's Freight House sees the space filled with enthusiastic shoppers picking up the freshest Michigan produce in what has been described as "Ypsilanti's Cobo Hall". A charming coffee shop, bathrooms, live music – from Saturday morning country style to the Winter Jazz Series – and other commuity-centered activities all create a stellar example of adaptive re-use of an historic structure. The indoor/outdoor Ypsilanti Farmers' Market is in full swing this time of year and another old building is finding a new life in today's world.

A New Train of Thought
Down In Depot Town

CABOOSTERS

Sandie and Bruce Jones rented the old Caboose in Depot Town on Staurday, June 5th for an evening with friends. Sandie writes:

"The party began as a "Bon Voyage" party at our home on Hemphill complete with wine, pate and paper streamers. We then drove down to the caboose to board the "Last Train from Paris." Wearing clothing from the 1940's, we had in attendance a Duke, a Seamstress, a Newspaper Reporter, an English Businessman, a Social Butterfly, a World War II Pilot, a Gangster and a Princess.

The box game of mystery and mayhem lasted four hours and took place in the lounge car of a train. The sound of passing trains, the storm and the atmosphere of the lovely caboose made it a big success. Thank you for a night to remember."

DTA's Old Caboose is available for private parties most evenings. Call 482-6371 to hear our reasonable rates.

Richard C. Laflin
bd
310 N. River
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
487-1510
B & D RETAIL PLUMBING
and HEATING, INC.

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DEPOT TOWN, YPSILANTI

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WE SPECIAL ORDER FOR YOU!
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CLOSED THURSDAY
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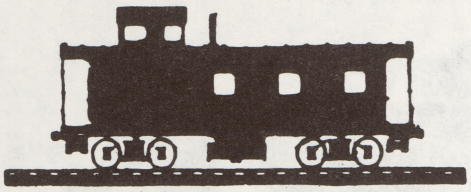
Ypsilanti
In Depot Town
485-4930



D.T.A. 19 June 1986

Called to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Old Caboose.

Secretary was out of town, so Carolyn McKeever took the minutes. May minutes corrected: late chair rental was .25 for 200 chairs, not 400 chairs. Minutes approved as corrected.

TREASURY:

Balance	$6323.89
General Fund	4707.58
Rag	537.30
Jazz	1550.00
Special	<470.99
Caboose Rehab	-0-
Halloween	34.78
Billboard	<707.24
Boomer Days	201.47

Discussion took place regarding the outstanding $707.24 in the billboard account. DTA has paid the amount and several neighbors now owe the Association for thier obligation for the promotional project they agreed to. Treasurer's report approved as presented.

JAZZ: Frog Island Blues and Jazz Festival is ready to go. Volunteers will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 25 at the Freight House.

SEMINARS: Jerry Meadows has traveled to management seminars in Kalamazoo and South Bend and has much to report at the September meeting.

FOLLET HOUSE BILLBOARD:

Meadows reported progress in the welcome sign to be mounted on the west wall of #17. Remote lighting has been recommended by Edison, but will not be included in the original proposed cost. An aluminum sign will cost $3000, plywood and paper will cost $1100. The project will not be covered by the Facade Incentive Grant Program by the City.

QUARTERLY MEETING: No report.

BOOMER DAYS: John Hinchey has included information in the July Ann Arbor Observer calendar.

- Voting for King and Queen needs setting up.
- Paul will coordinate donations for prizes and will be soliciting the block.
- Suczek will handle reception. Bonnie wants invitations to all.

City report will constitute the Quarterly Meeting Friday, June 11th. City Manager may be available.

- Jerry and Paul will run the No-Talent Show
- Hobo Brunch (coffee and donuts) is 10 a.m. Sunday at the Caboose.
- Costume judging at 3 p.m. Saturday. Need judges.
- Aproved $100 for printing. ($200 start-up is available.
- Discussed possible ice cream social.
- Carolyn will up-date the Boomer flyer
- Balloon Bust Ice Cream Social at Miller's Ice Cream Parlor.

AUGUST RAG: Proposed mass mailing tabled for lack of information.

Adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

AUGUST HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Events in Depot Town

- The Michigan ARTRAIN sponsored by E.M.U.
- The Heritage Jazz Competition Sponsorerd by WEMU & DTA
- The Great American Quilt Show
- Early Engine Expo
- The Great Toy Train Show
- Antique Auto Show
- Antique Bicycle Show
- The Great Train Race
- Merchant Sidewalk & Window Displays
- Farmers' Market

And YOU can help. None of this promotion happens by accident. It takes a lot of hard work. Just stop by the Chamber of Commerce offices on a Thursday afternoon or the Old Caboose on a Thursday night. There's plenty of work to do to welcome so many guests August 22, 23, and 24!

ADVERTISING in The Depot Town Rag is available to business enterprises from the environs of Depot Town (only) at the rate of nine dollars per month. Changes in copy may be made each month if desired, with new copy due on the third Thursday at the Caboose. Camera ready art may be included and may take a few days longer to set up. 1500 copies are distributed, free, throughout the area, while most are picked up in the block. The back page (Ragtime) features additional copy related to Depot Town businesses whether they are paid advertisers, or not. The cost of printing THE RAG is entirely supported by our advertisers.

Hansen's STANDARD PRINTING
"Historic Depot Town"
483-0339

Depot Town Rag

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG:

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

The Depot Town Association, Inc.
Gary McKeever, President
The Caboose, 400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Specializing in Unusual & Different Costume Jewelry
VINTAGE PASSION
Antiques - Collectables - Art Deco
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Tuesday - Saturday: 11:00 to 6:00
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IT'S A-MAZE-ING

Children's Habitat to Recall Hobo Jungle Days

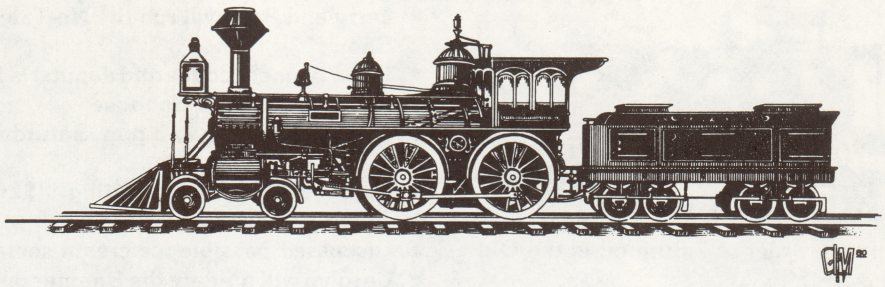
- *Every rail yard had its Jungle, "Hooverville," or encampment where the non-paying passengers jumped off freight cars to stay over, steal chickens for Mulligan Stew, and drink 'sneaky pete' between doing odd jobs for the families who lived near the tracks.*

- *Whoopie Goldberg, Robin Williams and Billy Crystal staged their fund-raising 'Comic Relief' amidst packing crates, cardboard boxes and sewer pipes to call attention to the living conditions of thousands of homeless urban Americans today.*

- *Depot Town's first several Boomer Days programs featured a Hobo Jungle which evolved into a neighborhood campfire, marshmallow roast and overnight family campout.*

July 11, 12, 13, will see the Hobo Jungle reappear in the form of a maze of corrugated cardboard structures for kids to climb through, play in and decorate. The 'jungle' will be partially assembled ahead of time by the block's adult committee of artists, architects and educators. Professor Malarkey will provide the media for yet another KIDSART session for further enhancing the structure – with the help of all those who are small enough and nimble enough to crawl through it. (The old perfessor, no doubt, will be mixing tempera paint outside the artful display.)

Photographers are encouraged to document the three-dimensional event – which will begin on the evening of Thursday, July 10th in the Market Plaza and continue though the weekend.



Ypsilanti's Rail Yard Was Different In Those Days

Amtrak and Conrail still slide through Depot town on their tracks between Detroit and Chicago, and everybody still waves at the engineer, but just a few years ago this was a very different kind of railroad district:

- The stock yards stretched down the east side of River Street from Depot Town to Cork Town on Michigan Avenue.

- The round house was near Gillentine's Upholstery building off Lincoln Street and more railroad shops continued on the other end of Lincoln, north of the tracks.

- The team tracks, house tracks and sidings which converged just beyond the Freight House were removed by Conrail in 1985.

- Today's switch engines, control tower and 'wye' are out at Willow Run, serving a new industry.

- The line to Hillsdale, called the Huckleberry Railroad by some, cut from the Michigan Central at a point just beyond Pine Lumber's yard.

- Giant black tanks identified the Gas Works at Huron and Forest the site of today's DPW yard.

- Cross Street was made extra wide so teams of horses could turn their freight wagons around. U-turns are still not prohibited.

- The crossing gates were operated by hand from the tower whose foundations still stands on the northwest corner of Cross and River.

- In 1948 twenty-six passengers trains a day stopped at the MCRR depot in Ypsilanti. Today's four trains just lay on the whistle as they pass through.

- The hobo jungle, at least once in its long history, was down behind today's YPSILANTI PRESS on the side of the river opposite Waterworks Park.

- The Alibi was a railroad hotel with a dining room downstairs, and The Central opened at 7 a.m. to give railroaders a quick shot after their all-night duty.

- The district smelled of coal, soot and steam and the trains' whistles could be heard all over town.

The water tank, ashes, coal and soot are gone now, but for a large part of its history, this mill town was also a railroad town. Sometimes a modern train watcher imagines a steam whistle, but it's only a diesel – or a spirit of another time still lurking in the neighborhood.

Eggs Milk Grains Produce Nuts Dried Fruits
Pasta Breads Juices Goats Milk Tempeh
Herbs Canned Goods Teas Spices
Yogurt Tofu Beans
YPSI FOOD COOP
312 N. River 483-1520
Sun. 12 - 4 Mon - Fri 10 - 7 Sat. 9 - 6

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PAPONETTI'S PASTA
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Ypsilanti, Michigan

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GOOD FOOD GOOD DRINKS GOOD TIMES
Located in historic Depot Town
56 E. Cross, Ypsilanti
483-1035

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Historic Depot Town

YPSILANTI RECYCLING PROJECT

Welcome the Ypsilanti Recycling Project to our growing list of sponsors. If the recyling concept is new to you, just stop by and watch what happens behind the City Body Shop every Saturday. You'll quickly realize how all the 'junk' in your garage and basement isn't really 'junk' at all. One stop will make an avid recycler of you, too. We dare you.

Now recycling newspapers, glass, metal cans, and oil

YPSILANTI RECYCLING PROJECT

SITE HOURS: 9-3 P.M. Sat.

For more information
STOP BY OR CALL
(office phone) 487-9727

Located behind 32 E. Cross Street

JULY

In keeping with our monthly "Ragtime" theme, we were going to group all the ads from businesses which had planted flowers in tubs, beds or planters on the July back page. Count the flower beds in Depot Town and you'll see why we couldn't do it. There are far too many to place on a single page. Hay fever season not withstanding, we love you for the summer display. Congratulations to the many Depot Towners who have worked to make the block so beautiful this summer.

RAGTIME

LIBERTY
1886 CENTENNIAL 1986

Celebrating Our Independence

Down in Depot Town

THE GRAND TRUNK, LTD.
CARDS & GIFTS

CALIFORNIA DREAMERS
ROCKSHOTS
COLONIAL CANDLES
SUZYS ZOO
WINDSOCKS
STATIONERY
IMPRINTING
GIFT WRAP
MAIL RECEIVING
ARTIST CONSIGNMENTS

15 E. CROSS
YPSILANTI, MI 485-4994
HOURS - 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.
IN HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

GRAFFITI! Hey, kids! Be the first on the block to have a multi-colored ARTRAIN T-shirt! See them and the colorful ARTRAIN postcards on display and for sale at PRONTO PIZZA and at GRAND TRUNK, LTD. from now until the ARTRAIN arrives at the end of August. If you're wearing a picture of the ARTRAIN, you won't have to take the blame for painting all that graffiti on it. It's not the same boring all-red train we saw five and ten year ago, you know!

PRONTO
PIZZA & SUBS
37 E. CROSS . DEPOT TOWN
YPSILANTI
483-4555
SUN-THU 4-12 FRI & SAT 4-2
Free Delivery
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CUSTOM FRAMING
DESIGNER MATS
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- PROFESSIONALS WITH ALL GRAPHICS, NEEDLECRAFT FRAMING OF OBJECTS
- ARCHIVAL FRAMING
- GALLERY OF ORIGINAL ART
- RENTAL WORKROOM

48 E. CROSS
DEPOT TOWN

IKE'S
DEPOT TOWN BARBER SHOP
48 E. CROSS YPSILANTI
483-5300

River Art Works' Paul Fetters celebrated his eighth anniversary in Depot Town with an open house last month. Recent interior changes highlight RAW's excellent selection of frames and matts and customers may arrange to use the shop to fashion their own frames, as well. Here is a craftsman's shop of the old tradition, doing the highest quality work for their clientele. Stop in and see the wide selection of traditional and modern framing supplies. Congratulations on your eight years, River Art Works. We're proud to have you on the block.

Miller's
ICE CREAM
42 E. Cross Ypsilanti, Michigan
485-7548
WEEKLY SPECIALS
Come in and enjoy your first cone of the season ! ! !
Always a Double Dip Special for 75¢

The Depot Town Rag enjoys more readers in August than any other month. More people see Depot town for the first time then, and we print an extra large run of Rags for Heritage Festival. Although the August issue hypes the Festival, the September issue will come out during Festival weekend just to remind people that we are here all year long. Our sponsors are encouraged to run 'specials' for each of these months at no extra cost. Just get the copy to The Old Caboose by Thursday, July 17th.

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town

ON EXHIBIT AT
THE FARMERS' MARKET
"Do Animals Have Rights?"
Humane Society Essay Contest

SATURDAY EVENTS

7/5 "Kidscraft" paint and draw, "What 4th of July means to me"
7/12 Annual Open Chess Tournament, Ypsi Chess Club 9-?
7/12 "Vegetarian Bar-B-Que" Co-op demo with samples 10-1.
7/19 "Making Herb Butters" sales & live demo at 10 & 12.
7/26 International Crafts Day! foods & gifts worldwide.

Join the bums, tramps and hoboes at
Depot Town's Annual
BOOMER DAYS
July 11, 12, 13